

Testimony

HR 6010- Cervical Cancer Education

Health and Human Services Committee

I am sorry that I am not here today to discuss the *Challenge to Eliminate Cervical Cancer* Campaign and HR 6010 that are designed to help reduce of the number of women in Kansas who die each year of this highly preventable disease. This resolution urges all of you to review the data regarding cervical cancer and human papillomavirus, and to improve the public education about the disease.

Although cervical cancer rates have decreased significantly over the last 60 years due to widespread use of the Pap test, there are still around 12,000 American women diagnosed with the disease each year. Two key issues have traditionally held us back from eliminating this preventable disease: First, we need more education and wider access to screening, and second, women need to be screened with greater accuracy so that early intervention is possible. With the recent approval of a test for human papillomavirus or HPV, the culprit behind virtually all cervical cancer cases, we have a tremendous opportunity to reduce the number of deaths still further, or even eliminate them all together.

Research shows that approximately half of all cervical cancer cases are in women who have never been screened and, 10 percent are in women who have not been screened in the last 5 years. However, the Pap smear's ability to identify women with cervical cancer or its precursors ranges between 51 percent and 85 percent, according to studies. Recent research shows that HPV testing is more effective at identifying women needing early intervention to stop the disease. However, a new report in an issue of the journal *Cancer* suggests that women lack important information about HPV and its role in the development of cervical cancer testing. With proper testing, widespread awareness, and complete dedication, cervical cancer will be a disease of the past.

I call on all of you to support this effort to ensure that no family in Kansas loses a mother, wife or sister to cervical cancer.

